RDA Statement on RBA Request for Continued Funding

Crown Point (June 27, 2012) – On June 27th, the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) received a request from the Regional Bus Authority for continued funding through June 30, 2013. In support of its request, the RBA presented a resolution from the Lake County Commissioners asking the state legislature to amend existing state law to provide funds for regional transportation.

In April, the RDA offered to provide gap funding beyond the June 30, 2012 shutdown date if local officials could identify and implement a permanent source of funding for regional transportation. This resolution does not accomplish that. There is no guarantee that the legislature would act in accordance with the resolution – and even if it did, the monies generated by the amended law would still be millions of dollars short of what is needed to fund the RBA.

Since 2005, the RDA has invested more than $12.3 million in regional busing in Northwest Indiana. This seed capital successfully established the base for a regional system. However it was always clear that local ownership and collaboration would be required to sustain and continually improve the system. The Commissioners' proposal for RBA funding is speculative and does not address the problem sufficiently enough to justify further use of tax dollars to support the RBA, or to jeopardize our other current projects and all the leverage and jobs they support.

The shutdown of the Regional Bus Authority leaves many residents of Northwest Indiana without access to needed public transportation services. The lack of such services is not only a hardship to those left without rides, but also impedes efforts to improve the quality of life in, and bring economic development to, Northwest Indiana. The RDA continues to work with local, state and federal officials to secure a permanent, stable source of funds to provide mass transit to the region.